



Association of California Water Agencies

Since 1910
January 20, 2005

Michael E. Alpert, Chair
Little Hoover Commission
925 L Street, Suite 805
Sacramento, California 95814

Re: GRP 1: Reforming California's Boards and Commissions

Dear Chairman Alpert:

The Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) is a statewide non-profit organization whose 447 public agency members are collectively responsible for 90 percent of the water delivered in California for residential and agricultural use. We would like to reaffirm our comments regarding specific recommendations by the California Performance Review report to eliminate several water-related boards and commissions.

Colorado River Board

ACWA opposes the elimination of the Colorado River Board and suggests taking a second look at this proposal to ensure California's Colorado River contracts between water agencies and the federal government are not threatened.

The state of California currently does not have a contract for Colorado River water or power with the federal government. While states such as Arizona and Nevada contract directly with the federal government, California contracts for Colorado River water and power are administered by the affected agencies including Metropolitan Water District (MWD), Imperial Irrigation District, Palo Verde Irrigation District, and Coachella Valley Water District. While the CPR proposal recommends that the Governor's Office along with the Secretary of Natural Resources assume responsibility for future negotiations regarding Colorado River water, this arrangement would result in the state having control over interests with which it does not currently have a contractual relationship. If the Colorado River Board is eliminated, it is essential that the function of that Board be structured in such a way that the interests of the federal water and power contract holders in California are still represented by those contract holders.

A last point to consider is that the state of California no longer funds the Colorado River Board—the affected agencies cover the annual budget of the board including state employees' salaries. As a result, the elimination of the Colorado River Board would not reduce costs for the state but actually increase spending by those departments entrusted with future negotiations.

California Water Commission

ACWA believes the California Water Commission plays a very important role in state government and should not be eliminated without careful consideration.

If the California Water Commission is abolished, the creation of a mechanism that can effectively adopt regulations for the Department of Water Resources is essential. An often-underrated function of the Water Commission that must also be maintained is the ability to effectively lobby the federal government for funds to pay for water infrastructure in California. Given the bipartisan effort in our state to obtain additional funding from federal sources, this function should not be ignored.

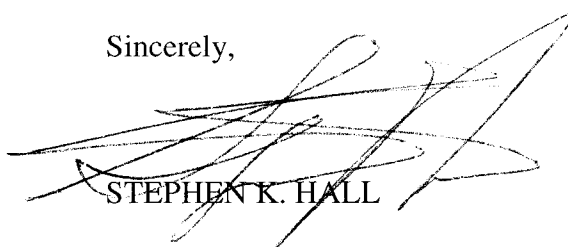
California Reclamation Board

ACWA also believes the Reclamation Board is important to California's flood control efforts.

If the decision is made to eliminate the existing Reclamation Board, it must be replaced with a body of sufficient expertise and authority to ensure an effective partnership between state and local government on flood control issues. The development of such a body may result from the discussions surrounding the Department of Water Resources white paper, "Flood Warning: Responding to California's Flood Crisis." Until such time as it can be replaced by an effective successor, the Reclamation Board should not be abolished.

ACWA looks forward to working with the Schwarzenegger Administration, the Little Hoover Commission and other stakeholders in deliberating how best to proceed with these recommendations.

Sincerely,



STEPHEN K. HALL

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